

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 08378 081513Z

62

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 IO-13 OMB-01 /079 W

----- 043712

R 081414Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 839

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USIA

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, SY, US

SUBJECT: SYRIAN COLUMNIST APPEALS TO U.S. TO SEIZE OPPORTUNITY
FOR ME

1. DEC. 6 TISHRIIN COLUMN BY WELL-KNOWN COMMENTATOR
JIBRAN KURIYAH REVIEWED ASAD INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH KRAFT
IN WHICH, KURIYAH NOTED, ASAD HAD STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF
AMERICAN ROLE IN PEACE EFFORTS. COLUMNIST ASSERTED THAT,
"THIS APPEAL BY ASAD TO U.S. IS CONSIDERED NEW OPPORTUNITY
FOR USG TO ABANDON ITS BIASED POSTURE." HE STATED HE NOT
ASKING FOR REVOLUTION IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY BUT SIMPLY
"ABANDONMENT OF A POSITION THAT HAS NOT OVER THE YEARS
SERVED EITHER CAUSE OF PEACE OR U.S. INTERESTS." HE
ADDED THAT "U.S. IS ONLY BEING ASKED TO ACCEPT UN RESES.
AND TO HELP IN THEIR EXECUTION." HE CONCLUDED THAT
"ARABS HAVE EXPRESSED REAL DESIRE FOR JUST PEACE.
THEY HAVE GIVEN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITY
TO ESTABLISH JUST PEACE. IT REMAINS FOR U.S. AND OTHER
CONCERNED STATES TO DETERMINE THEIR POSITIONS."

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PAGE 02 DAMASC 08378 081513Z

2. COMMENT: KURIYAH'S RELATIVELY RESTRAINED TREATMENT

OF U.S. ME POLICY CONTRASTS WITH HIS SLASHING ATTACKS
AGAINST U.S. POLICY IN LEBANON PERCEIVED HOSTILE TO
SYRIA DURING COURSE OF AMB. BROWN'S MISSION. AT THAT
TIME TISHRIIN PROVIDED PLATFORM FOR SHRILL, ALMOST DAILY
EXPRESSIONS OF HIS SUSPICIONS REGARDING AMERICAN AIMS
IN LEBANON AND REGION WHICH SET TONE FOR WHAT WAS UNBALANCED
INTERPRETATION -- EVEN BY SYRIAN MEDIA STANDARDS -- OF
U.S. POLICY. WE DOUBT THAT VETERAN LEFTIST LIKE KURIYAH
HAS CHANGED ANY OF HIS BASCI SUSPICIONS TOWARD U.S., BUT
IN THIS CASE HIS HOSTILITY SEEMS OUTWEIGHED BY DESIRE TO
ARTICULATE HIS VIEW OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR U.S. TO STIMULATE
PROGRESS TOWARD REGIONAL PEACE. IN THIS HE REFLECTS THE
MORE GENERAL POST-SUMMIT/POTST-ELECTION OPINION TREND IN
SYRIA.
MURPHY

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